

A Look at Duxbury's Athletic Past: Pre-1950

By FRANK KEMP

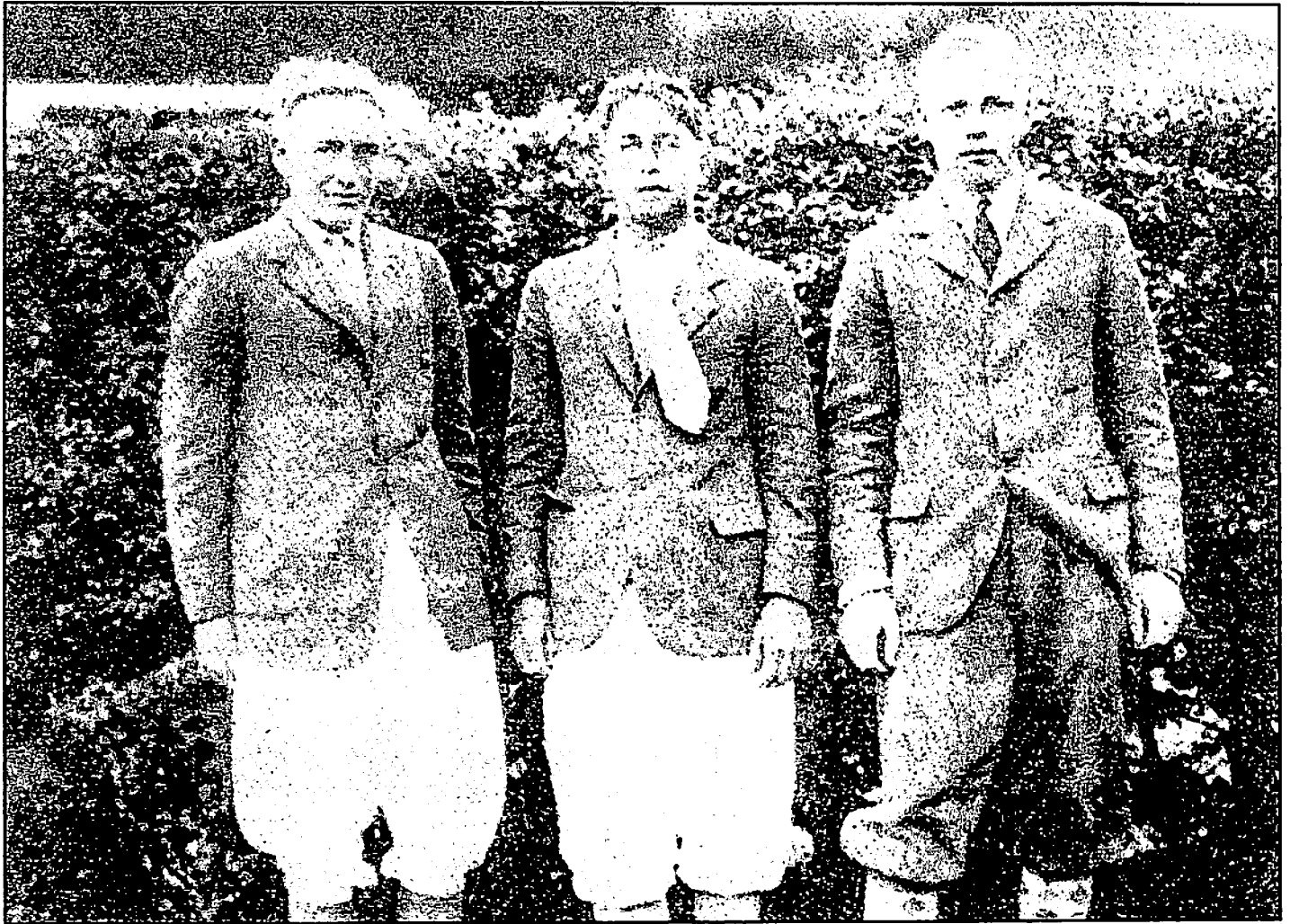
Maybe you grew up here in Duxbury. Maybe your family moved here long ago, or just yesterday. The Duxbury tradition and quality of life envelops us like the air we breathe or the water that surrounds us. We have wonderful examples of our historic traditions: buildings, land, beaches, the bay, and open spaces. It is so easy for all of us to see, touch, smell, and enjoy. Let us look deeper into our traditions to know the people of an earlier day. Those that had the honor of eating Duxbury dirt and tasting Duxbury water.

One of our finest attributes and a bedrock of our community is the outstanding athletic tradition we have and develop to this day. The brief glimpses and very short stories into this athletic tradition that are listed below are just a slight scratching of the surface of the men and women who have laid a standard that continues in the town today. The most difficult part of putting together this list of pre-1950 athletes was getting records and general information about them. Keep in mind that in 1935 the town population was only 2,000, compared to 3,100 in 1950 and over 15,000 today. The general percentage of young people is about 20

to 25 percent of the population. The High School student body was just a small fraction of what it is today. In 1950, sports as a professional occupation was limited to a very small group of the population.

The star athletes of the past often achieved limited publicity and were not considered the super heroes they are today. In a town such as Duxbury, the sea and bay played a critical role in the town's sporting activities and was the major site for competition. Organized sailing started on the bay around 1875 when Duxbury was an important summer relaxation location for Boston and the Northeast. The Duxbury Yacht Club was the major source of organized competition on the bay from the turn of the century through the 1950's and continues to be today. Organized town recreational sports events were limited or non-existent in the first half of the century.

Consider the fact that at this very moment a movie for the big screen is being filmed depicting a story of the Cape Cod semi-professional baseball league. As you will see, Duxbury men were a part of that fine tradition. It is my hope that all who remember or know of others and their athletic achievements will let that information be known to us before time washes away the memories and the best of old Duxbury is forgotten.



The 1923 Sears Cup champions (L-R) Marshall Dwinell, Captain Ray Hunt and Baldwin Robinson in "plus four knickers"-- the standard attire of the day. *Photo courtesy of the Duxbury Yacht Club*

MRS. C. F. "CRIS" EATON JR.

The First Lady of Massachusetts Golf, that is what Bill Robertson of the Patriot Ledger called Eaton in 1957. She was the President of the New England Woman's Golf Association from 1959 to 1965, President of the Woman's Golf Association of Massachusetts from 1954 to 1957, and served two terms as President of the South Shore League.

In 1948 she won the South Shore Women's Championship, was the Women's Champion at The Country Club in Brookline, and in Duxbury won the championship over 15 times.

1965 was a special year for Eaton when she scored a hole-in-one on the ninth-hole at the Myopia Hunt Club and later that summer did it again at the D.Y.C.; two holes-in-one in a single summer. What a thrill!

Her ability on the golf course was indeed formidable, but she is most remembered as a person who loved the game and the people who played it. Marge McMillian says, "She never sought out just the better golfers with whom to play, she tried to play with as many different people as possible." The W.G.A.M. said, "Cris Eaton embodied the full essence of a lady golfer. It never rained when Cris played golf."

She also served her community after graduating from Wellesley College and was active in Massachusetts's Republican politics and a member and Chairman of the Wellesley School Committee. Mrs. Eaton is remembered yearly for her dedication and efforts to Massachusetts' golf with the playing of the Cris Eaton Foursomes Tournament, started in 1966.

C. RAYMOND HUNT

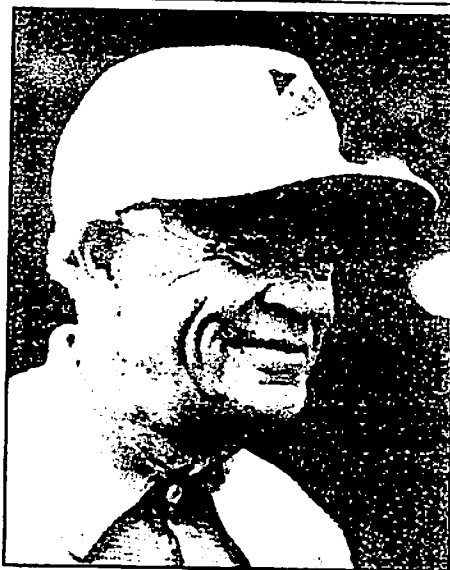
When the President of the United States invites you and your crew to tea with him, it is indeed an honor and the importance of your accomplishment is greatly enhanced.

Marshall Dwinell, Baldwin

Robinson and skipper Ray Hunt followed up on President Calvin Coolidge's invitation shortly after winning the 1923 Sears Cup (the National Junior Sailing Championship) held at the Eastern Yacht Club in Marblehead. Hunt would duplicate the feat in 1925, winning the Cup again with Dwinell and new crew member, Ed Kelly Jr.

The following year Hunt spent more time on the links, winning the D.Y.C. Junior Golf Championship, but he continued to win many races on the bay sailing Pilgrim Class boats.

A designer of 110 and 220 class racing boats, Hunt also devoted many hours to teaching young sailors the skills needed to carry on the sailing tradition in Duxbury Bay.



Bill Ellison

WILLIAM PARTRIDGE ELLISON

Bill Ellison was a man for all seasons: baseball, hockey, shooting, sailing, and golf.

In the mid-20's, Ellison lettered in baseball and hockey at Harvard University which turned out to be great years for the school's baseball (15-0-7) and hockey (25-1-6) teams. As Harvard's hockey captain in 1926, he led the Crim-

son to the intercollegiate title and was honored 60 years later by being inducted into the Harvard University Varsity Hall of Fame.

Ellison continued playing baseball in the Cape Cod League, the premier amateur baseball league in America, and the proving ground for many of today's Major League baseball players.

A member of The Country Club and the D.Y.C., he won many awards and championships throughout the years, but may best be known as the greatest benefactor to the town of Duxbury. He and his family have been committed to the town prior to 1919 when they helped form the Duxbury Beach Association. The numerous donations to the schools, the establishment of the Performing Arts Center, the athletic building at Wheaton College and his Foundation's gift to the Harvard Varsity Club in 1998, are just some of his philanthropic acts. We will probably never know the reach of his generosity and the impact he and his family have had on so many. Thank you.

SYLVIA SHETHAR "RUSTY" EVERDELL

Rusty Everdell was probably the most renowned female sailor to ever sail the waters of Duxbury Bay and the Cape.

A member of the American Yacht Club in Connecticut, she eventually joined the Duxbury Yacht Club.

Beginning in 1939, Everdell won three Adams Cup titles over the next eight years, emblematic of the Women's National Sailing Championships, and a number of years later she would take the Highlander National Championship in 1954 and 1967.

In 1971 D.Y.C. would put together a team with Everdell at the helm that would include Pamela O'Day, Mrs. Horace Sawyer, Jr., and Mrs. David Fogg, an unbeatable combination that